

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAGU 03190 072311Z

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0513

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MANAGUA 3190

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: BPRO, EINV, NU

SUBJECT: GAS POPULAR CASE

REF: STATE 165944

1. THERE HAVE BEEN FEW NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN GAS POPULAR VS. INFONAC CASE SINCE FEBRUARY. APPARENTLY RALPH MOYER, THE OWNER OF GAS POPULAR, AND INFONAC HAVE HELD SEVERAL MEETINGS, BUT NOTHING APPEARS TO HAVE COME OUT OF THEM. MOYER ACCUSES INFONAC OF A LACK OF INTEREST IN SETTLING THE DISPUTE, SINCE THEY WOULD HAVE TO PAY A SUBSTANTIAL (BUT NEVER SPECIFIED BY MOYER) SUM TO GAS POPULAR. INFONAC, ON THE OTHER HAND, CLAIMS THAT MOYER HAS NEVER PRESENTED INFONAC WITH EXACT FIGURES, PREFERING TO GO OFF ON TANGENTS ABOUT PERSONAL HARASSMENT BY GON OFFICIALS, THE POLITICS BEHIND INFONAC'S LACK OF PAYMENTS, AND ENDLESS OTHER STORIES ONLY INDIRECTLY RELATED TO THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM.

2. EMBASSY OFFICIALS FROM THE COMMERCIAL SECTION HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH BOTH INFONAC AND MOYER RECENTLY IN ORDER TO URGE BOTH PARTIES TO RENEW THEIR STALLED NEGOTIATIONS. WE HAVE EVEN OFFERED TO HAVE THE COMMERCIAL OFFICER SIT IN AS AN OBSERVER TO THE DISCUSSIONS, A GESTURE THAT WAS ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED BY BOTH INFONAC AND MOYER. INFONAC CLAIMS MOYER REPEATEDLY MENTIONED THAT THE EMBASSY BACKED HIM FULLY. AT THE SAME TIME, MOYER ACCUSES INFONAC OF BEATING AROUND THE BUSH. BOTH APPARENTLY FEEL THAT THE COMMERCIAL OFFICER'S PRESENCE WOULD KEEP THE OTHER PARTY "IN LINE" DURING TALKS.

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PAGE 02 MANAGU 03190 072311Z

3. THE EMBASSY HAS URGED MOYER ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS TO PRESENT

INFONAC WITH A SPECIFIC CLAIM, SOMETHING HE HAS TO DATE NOT DONE.
WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW MOYER CAN NEGOTIATE WITHOUT A SPECIFIC

DOLLAR FIGURE AS TO WHAT HE FEELS INFONAC OWES HIM. MOYER
PROMISED US TWO WEEKS AGO THAT HE WOULD HAVE HIS ACCOUNTANTS
DRAW UP A DETAILED CLAIM AGAINST INFONAC. WHEN THIS INFORMATION
IS READY MOYER WILL REQUEST A NEW MEETING WITH INFONAC.

4. HECTOR WILKINSON, THE INFONAC VICE PRESIDENT IN CHARGE OF
THE GAS POPULAR NEGOTIATIONS, ASSURES THE EMBASSY THAT HIS AGENCY
IS SERIOUSLY INTERESTED IN SETTLING THE MATTER. MR. WILKINSON
APPEARS TO BE QUITE SINCERE, AND BASED ON THE COMMERCIAL OFFICER'S
ACQUAINTANCE WITH MR. WILKINSON DATING BACK TO BEFORE THE MOYER
CASE, GAS POPULAR IS PROBABLY FORTUNATE TO HAVE WILKINSON AP-
POINTED BY INFONAC TO HANDLE THEIR NEGOTIATIONS. WILKINSON IS
INTELLIGENT, OUTWARDLY SINCERE, AND EASY TO DEAL WITH.

5. THE EMBASSY WILL DO EVERYTHING SHORT OF BECOMING DIRECTLY
INVOLVED IN ORDER TO BRING THE GAS POPULAR CASE TO A CLOSE. JUST
FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S INFORMATION, MR. MOYER HAS BEEN LESS THAN
OPEN WITH THE EMBASSY, AND HIS MSLHOD OF NEGOTIATING WITH INFONAC
HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. MR. MOYER HAS BY NO MEANS EX-
HAUSTED ALL LEGAL CHANNELS HERE IN NICARAGUA, IN FACT HE APPEARS
TO BE UNWILLING TO TAKE ANY LEGAL ACTION HERE, PREFERRING TO DO
LITTLE MORE THAN WRITE HIS CONGRESSMEN, TALK TO EMBASSY OFFICIALS
FOR HOURS, AND WRITE LONG LETTER TO ASSORTED CONTACTS. WE DO FEEL
THAT MOYER HAS A GOOD CASE AGAINST INFONAC, AND WE URGE HIM TO
PRESENT SPECIFIC FIGURES AND DOCUMENTATION AS TO WHAT INFONAC OWES
HIM. WE HAVE INFONAC'S ASSURANCE THAT THEY WILL NEGOTIATE IN GOOD
FAITH, AND THE BALL IS NOW IN MOYER'S HALF OF THE COURT. WE ARE
AWAITING MOYER'S CALL INFORMING US WHEN HE WILL MEET WITH INFONAC.
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